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STRIKEFORCE
SUPERMAN
IN ACTION COMICS
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$2.25 US $3.75 CAN

IT ALWAYS FEELS WEIRD, DOESN'T IT...?
GETTING "THE CALL"? EVEN THOUGH WE'VE BEEN THROUGH IT --
WE HAVEN'T BEEN THROUGH THIS. AND HEY, YOU NEED ANY HELP WITH THAT ZIPPER, YOU JUST HOLLER.
NOT ON ANY OF YOUR CLONED LITTLE LIVES.
OUCH. YOU WERE A LOT MORE POLITE ABOUT TURNING ME DOWN WHEN YOU WERE HALF ANGEL --
SHE'S HERE, YO. CAN IT.
I WANT TO MAKE SURE ONE THING IS CRYSTAL.
THIS IS ALL ME. HE DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE THAT I CONTACTED YOU YET... BUT I HAD TO...
... BECAUSE I KNEW HE WOULDN'T. EVEN THOUGH HE TRUSTS EACH OF YOU WITH HIS LIFE. WITH HIS --
-- OUR SECRETS -- I KNEW HE WOULDN'T CALL... JUST NOT HIS STYLE.
SOMEONE IS TRYING TO KILL SUPERMAN.
NOT A "POINT A PURPLE RAY AT HIM DURING A BANK ROBBERY" GUY --
OUR ASSASSIN IS BACK. THE ONE WHO CAME THIS CLOSE TO DOING THE JOB RIGHT. THIS CLOSE...
HE DOESN'T WANT HELP, BECAUSE HE THINKS THIS IS PERSONAL.
BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO GET COMPLICATED.
HE'S RIGHT. THAT'S YOUR FAIR WARNING IF YOU WANT TO BACK OUT, NO HARM, NO FOUL.
LOIS... IT'S SUPERMAN. NO ONE BAGS ON SUPERMAN, WHETHER HE LIKES IT OR NOT.
DON'T WORRY... WE'RE ALL OVER THIS.
LET'S GET DIRTY.

ACTION COMICS 779, July, 2001. Published monthly by DC Comics, 1700 Broadway, New York, NY 10019. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to ACTION COMICS, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate $27.00. Canadian subscribers must add $12.00 for postage and GST. GST # is R125921072. All foreign countries must add $12.00 for postage. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 2001 DC Comics. All Rights Reserved. All characters featured in this issue, the distinctive likenesses thereof, and all related indicia are trademarks of DC Comics. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. Printed on recyclable paper.
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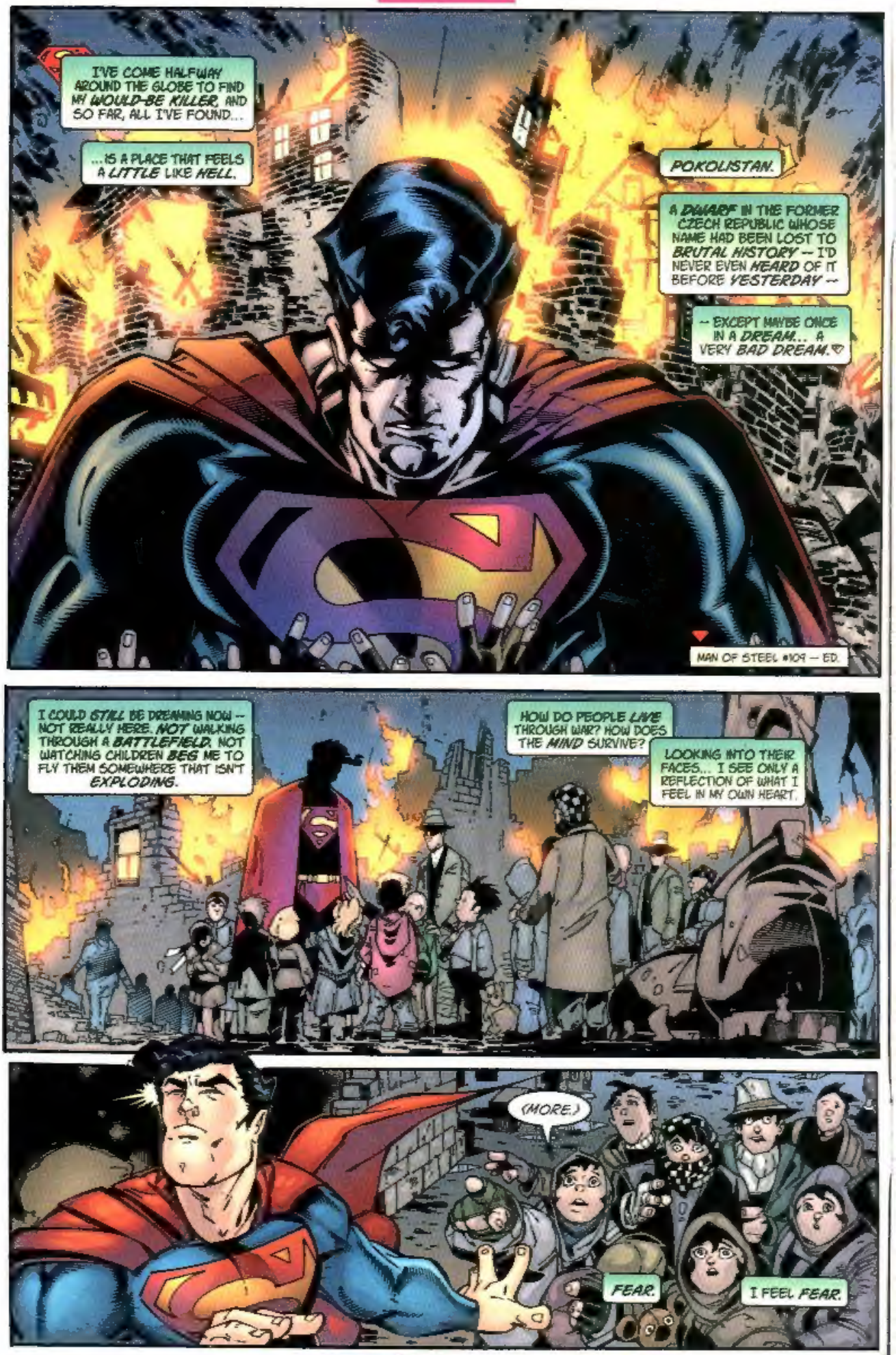
I'VE COME HALFWAY AROUND THE GLOBE TO FIND MY WOULD-BE KILLER, AND SO FAR, ALL I'VE FOUND...
...IS A PLACE THAT FEELS A LITTLE LIKE HELL.
POKOLISTAN.
A DWARF IN THE FORMER CZECH REPUBLIC WHOSE NAME HAD BEEN LOST TO BRUTAL HISTORY -- I'D NEVER EVEN HEARD OF IT BEFORE YESTERDAY --
-- EXCEPT MAYBE ONCE IN A DREAM... A VERY BAD DREAM.
MAN OF STEEL #109 -- ED.
I COULD STILL BE DREAMING NOW -- NOT REALLY HERE. NOT WALKING THROUGH A BATTLEFIELD. NOT WATCHING CHILDREN BEG ME TO FLY THEM SOMEWHERE THAT ISN'T EXPLODING.
HOW DO PEOPLE LIVE THROUGH WAR? HOW DOES THE MIND SURVIVE?
LOOKING INTO THEIR FACES... I SEE ONLY A REFLECTION OF WHAT I FEEL IN MY OWN HEART.
(MORE.)
FEAR.
I FEEL FEAR.

SOMEONE IN THIS COUNTRY KNEW ME WELL ENOUGH TO GET INSIDE MY BODY...
...AND NEARLY POISONED ME TO DEATH.
THE SAME PERSON SENT A MONSTER ON A KILLING SPREE JUST TO GET MY ATTENTION...
...KNOWING I WOULDN'T STAND FOR IT. KNOWING I'D FOLLOW THE TRAIL OF BODIES HERE.
I'VE BEEN INVITED HERE. INVITED TO DIE.
NO... IT CAN'T BE HIM.
THEY HAVE ME EXACTLY WHERE THEY WANT ME.
I'M COUNTING ON IT.

KING TAKES PAWN
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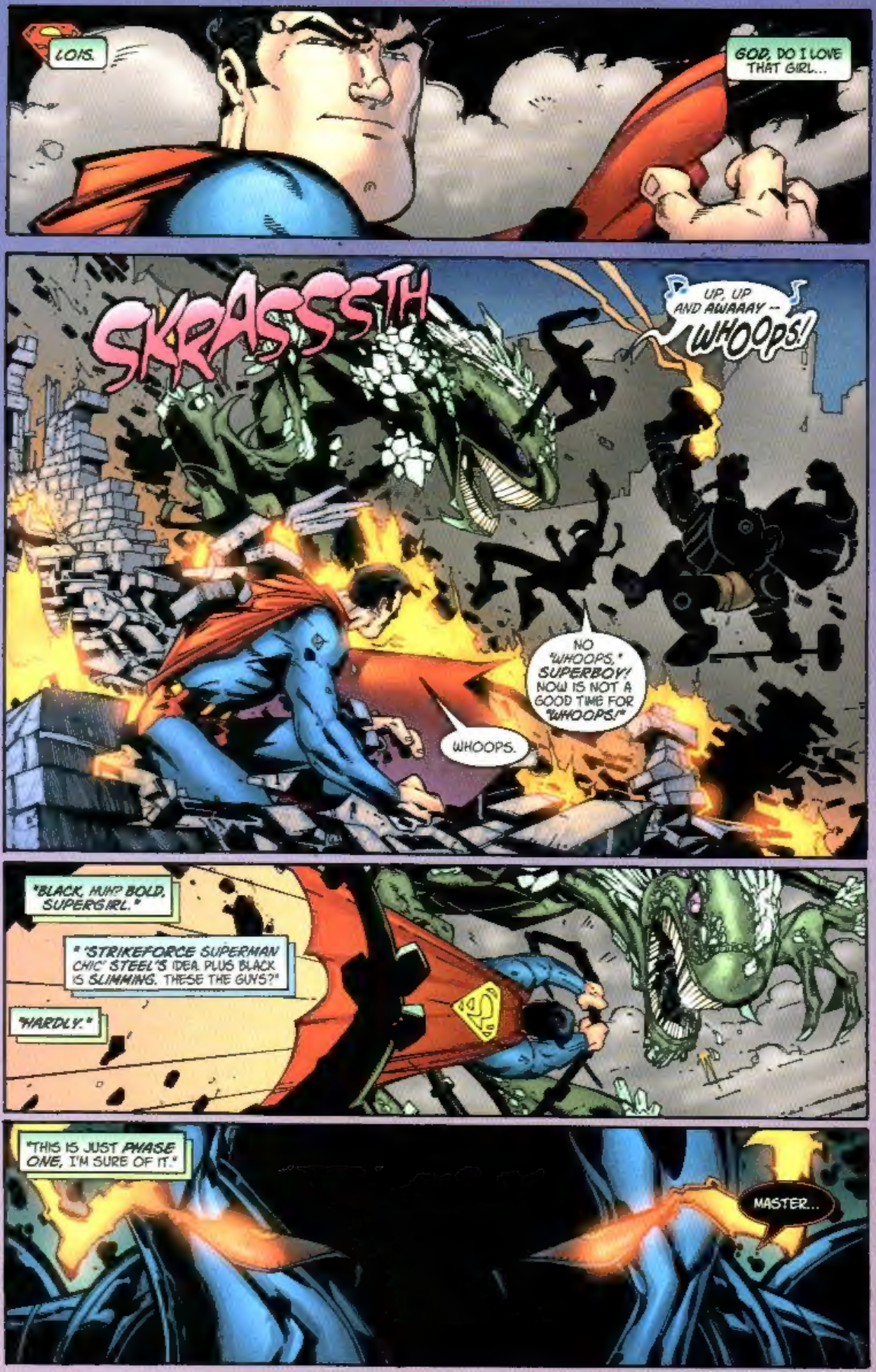
I'M IN SHOCK FOR THE TEN SECONDS IT TAKES UNTIL I LAY EYES ON HIM.
ASANTICHA! DEATH DEALER FROM ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE. HE'S NOT SUPPOSED TO EXIST --
-- AND THEN I REMEMBER THAT DREAM AGAIN. HE WAS THERE... WITH A WOMAN.
THE FEELING OF A FIST CLOSING AROUND ME BECOMES UNDENIABLE.
"There are places in the world not found on any map. There are people in the world who have no name... until history happens. Then, the invisible get their due."
-- Clark Kent, Daily Planet, April 2001

I'M A BIG BELIEVER IN COINCIDENCE, IGNITION.
HNNGH!
KWHAMM
GOES HAND IN HAND WITH FAITH. BUT EVEN I'M NOT SWALLOWING THIS AS A "HAPPY ACCIDENT."
YOU WON'T REMEMBER THIS, BUT WE'VE PLAYED THIS GAME BEFORE. SO FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE...
...WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE BEFORE I KNOCK YOU OUT OF YOUR CARGO PANTS?
MAN-GOD... SO WIDE-EYED, YET SO BLIND.
EMPEROR JOKER... IT'S ALL COMING TOGETHER, ISN'T IT, FOLKS? -- ED.
"THE PAST IS MINE TO REMEMBER. HIS FUTURE MINE TO BEHOLD."
THE POWER OF MY MASTER TRANSCENDS THE PETTY UNIVERSE OF OUR FIRST MEETING!
FWOOM
WHO? WHO HAS YOU TEARING ACROSS POKOLISTAN? WHO WANTED ME HERE?
WHO SENT --

FATHERRR... YOU CAME.
YOU CARRRRRE!
AND THUS, MY MASTER'S WILL IS MADE REALITY.
TO STAND AT THE CREST OF DESTINY.
...WELL... NOW THAT WE HAVE THE TRAP-SPRINGING OFFICIALLY OUT OF THE WAY...
...ANSWERS.
THE NAME.
KWANG
WHO BROUGHT YOU TWO TOGETHER --

KANCER!
CHOOM
...AWESOME.
LOVE, OF COURSSSSSE.
LOVVVE.
AGAIN.
WE ARE NOT ALONE.

HSSKKT!!
BOO.
TELEPORT COMPLETE--
SO CAN WE HIT THEM NOW?
WITH EVERY OUNCE OF FORCE YOUR SKINNY SELF CAN MUSTER.
DAMN SKIPPY, MY DOGG.


LOIS.
GOD, DO I LOVE THAT GIRL...
SKRASSSTH
UP, UP AND AWAAAY -- WHOOPS!
NO "WHOOPS," SUPERBOY! NOW IS NOT A GOOD TIME FOR "WHOOPS!"
WHOOPS.
"BLACK, HUH? BOLD, SUPERGIRL."
" 'STRIKEFORCE SUPERMAN CHIC' STEEL'S IDEA PLUS BLACK IS SLIMMING. THESE THE GUYS?"
"HARDLY."
"THIS IS JUST PHASE ONE, I'M SURE OF IT."
MASTER...

ADVERSARIES UNEXPECTED, YOUR WISHES?
WISH, IGNITION
S FOR HIS LITTLE SNOW BIRD TO LEAVE HER NEST
AND GET HER WINGS BLOODY
CASE I DON'T GET A CHANCE LATER YOU'RE ALL IN TROUBLE
EVEN YOU "STEEL"
OH AND THANK YOU VERY VERY MUCH
BLAH BLAH ME FIRST

"AS YOU CAN SEE, SAM, SHOULD THE POKOLISTAN SITUATION DEVELOP AMERICA WILL BE PREPARED."
"YOU DON'T MESS AROUND DO YOU?"
"I DON'T WANT THE AMERICAN MILITARY TO BE THE BEST IN THE WORLD I WANT IT TO BE THE BEST OF ALL TIME." YOUR WORDS, SAM YOUR LEGACY
OUTSTANDING, SIR OUTSTANDING BUT --
ISN'T THERE A "CONFLICT OF INTERESTS"? THE LEXCORP CONTRACT --
FERRIS IS THE WORLD'S LEADER IN AVIATION TECHNOLOGY THAT'S WHY THEY RUN THE AIR SUPPORT DIVISION
BUT FERRIS DOES NOT HAVE TECHNOLOGY FROM MILLENNIA INTO OUR FUTURE AS LEXCORP TECHNOLOGY
LEXCORP CAN ENSURE AMERICAN MILITARY DOMINANCE. CERTAINLY YOU CAN SEE THAT LOGIC?
YES SIR BUT
IT'S NO MORE A "CONFLICT" THAN THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BEING THE FATHER OF A NOTORIOUS --
IF NOT JEPTIST REPORTER WITH A GRUDGE AGAINST THE PRESIDENT
I HAVE PLEDGED MY CAREER
MY HONOR TO THE SERVICE OF THIS COUNTRY NOTHING WILL COMPROMISE THE PLEDGE
SIR
OF COURSE NOT, SAM. OF COURSE NOT
AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO MAKE HISTORY.
WE MEN OF HONOR

STEEL, SUPERBOY! TAKE KANCER! YOU SHOULD BE PROTECTED FROM HIS NECROTIC TOUCH --
-- SUPERGIRL! YOU'RE WITH ME ON IGNITION -- I HOPE YOU'VE BEEN PRACTICING YOUR LEAPING!
EVERY DAY!
KOOM
CHOOM
PWOOM
GROUND MEET NASTIES. NASTIES EAT THIS!
THIS ENDS HERE!
TRUE, LITTLE ONE -- BUT IN A WAY YOU COULD NEVER IMAGINE.

IF I HAVE TO TEAR THE ANSWERS OUT OF YOU A PIECE AT A TIME --
ZCHOWW
YEARRGH!
YOU'LL TELL ME WHO'S TRYING TO KILL ME!
I'M NOT TALKING "YOUR MASTER'S" NAME
OF COURSE YOU ARE...
YOU SNIFFF YOU ARE... KINNN...?
OH YEAH? WELL, SORRY I BOGARTED THE GOOD LOOKS AND THE BRAINS -- CROQUET THIS UGLY STEEL
...WE ALL ARE."
HOLD STILL, SUP
ERROR UNCATALOGED SPECIAL DISPLACE
OOPS

FWOSSSSH
MAN GO HOME NOW? I DO SO DETEST THE SME OF BURNING MEN
NO!
FAORA. THE SUN AND THE DARK.
STEEL!
AND MY MASTER'S "GAME" CONTINUES --
-TORTUROUS.

RIGHT YOU TRASHED THE RIDE WOMAN BUT THE DRIVER'S STILL GOT GAS
LET'S START SOME!
OH OH THIS WAS WORTH IT FOR THE LAUGH ALONE WHAT ARE YOU
KELEX HANG TOUGH, I'LL GET YOUR BACK
RIGHT AFTER I CRACK HIS!
INSULTED AGAINNN, FATHER, I AM MORE OF YOUR BLOODDDD THAN THIS -- WHELP --
--YET HE GARNERS YOUR FAVORRR? BEARSSS YOUR CREST?!
SHEAAAAAAA!
SCRRR
SO BE IT. WELCOMMME TO THE FAM-LY. SORRY YOU WONN'T BE STAYINGG.
HE HE CUT ME HOW THE OW
SCHARGH
THIS WAS A MISTAKE
15

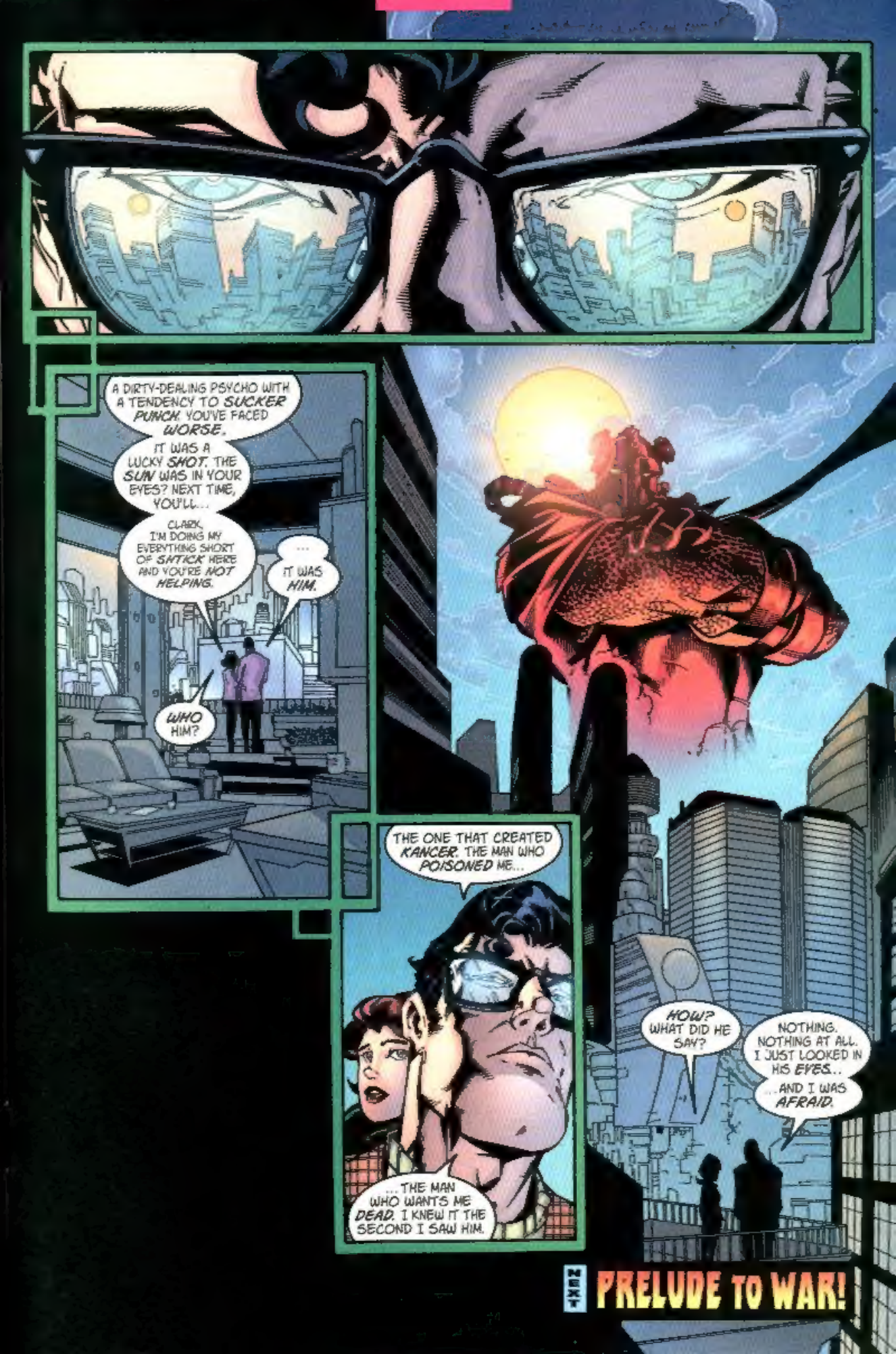
I'M SORRY, I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET YOU. GET OUT OF HERE ALL OF YOU PLEASE
NO WAY IT'S JUST A FLESH WOUND, DUDE
WE --
I SAID GO!
LET THEM, STAYYY, FATHERRRR. PLEASE. I WANT TO PLAYYY.
DO WE FINISH THEM ALL NOW? I HAVE WORK TO DO
YES--
NO. WAIT. FEEL HIM?
SKREEEEEEEEEE

SCHRA
KOOM
COMING
CHOOM
GFF -- RRKT
BBL

S-SCANNING-- WE NEED TO-- SCANNING-- OH MY--
WHAT THE F@#$ IS THAT?!
...
SUPERMAN? YOUR JAW... GOOD LORD...
...HE BROKE YOUR JAW.
NOT POSSIBLE. THIS JUST DOESN'T HAPPEN--
HE'S COMING AROUND AGAIN! GET UP!
LEFF GOH
SUPERMAN, I DON'T-- I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD--
COMPLETE...
DOOMSDAY.

SKREEEEE
BOOOOM
NO, NOT AGAIN.
DOLLET
"I KNOW... YOU'RE TICKED AT ME, KAL-EL, BUT I DON'T CARE, I –
"– I HAD TO. I COULDN'T LET YOU DO IT."

THE READINGS, YOUR VITAL SIGNS...
IT WAS DOOMSDAY ALL OVER AGAIN.
HE WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU, BIG BLUE.
I'M SORRY... BUT I'D RATHER HAVE YOU ALIVE AND ANGRY THAN DEAD.
JUST DON'T GET IT. WE ALL TOOK OUR SHARE FROM IGNITION AND THE REST, BUT THAT DUDE--
IT WAS A TRAP. A TRAP ALL ALONG.
AND NOW PRESIDENT LUTHOR HAS "OFFICIALLY" SHUT HIM DOWN FROM GOING BACK TO POKOLISTAN. SAID HE MAY CAUSE AN "INTERNATIONAL" INCIDENT--
AND SOME MANIAC IN ARMOR SUCKER-PUNCHING SUPERMAN IS THE OLYMPIC FREAKIN' GAMES? IF HE'D SEEN THAT ONE COMING--
NOTHING WOULD HAVE CHANGED.
"COME ON, KELEX. HE'S SUPERMAN! HE WOULD HAVE--"
LOOK AT HIM! I'M NOT PLAYING NURSEMAID. I'M NOT OVERANALYZING, KON-EL... LOOK AT HIM...
THE MAN'S LUCKY TO BE ALIVE.


A DIRTY-DEALING PSYCHO WITH A TENDENCY TO SUCKER PUNCH. YOU'VE FACED WORSE.
IT WAS A LUCKY SHOT. THE SUN WAS IN YOUR EYES? NEXT TIME, YOU'LL...
CLARK, I'M DOING MY EVERYTHING SHORT OF SATTICK HERE AND YOU'RE NOT HELPING.
...
IT WAS HIM.
WHO HIM?
THE ONE THAT CREATED KANCER. THE MAN WHO POISONED ME...
...THE MAN WHO WANTS ME DEAD. I KNEW IT THE SECOND I SAW HIM.
HOW? WHAT DID HE SAY?
NOTHING. NOTHING AT ALL. I JUST LOOKED IN HIS EYES..
...AND I WAS AFRAID.
NEXT
PRELUDE TO WAR!